



February 8, 2021

Dear Governor Kemp, Commissioner Toomey, and Commissioner Berry,

LeadingAge Georgia is the association for not-for-profit and other mission-driven organizations who provide housing and services for older adults. Our members serve over 127,000 older Georgians throughout the continuum of care and over sixty-five percent of our members are faith-based.

First, we would like to thank you for all you have done to keep residents and staff in long-term care safe during the pandemic. We greatly appreciate that you made vaccinations available, arranged for the Georgia National Guard to help with infection control, provided visiting guidelines designed to keep residents safe and made monoclonal antibody infusions available in nursing homes. We know that you care about the safety and well-being of older adults.

Residents in our communities have been very grateful for the opportunity to receive vaccinations. Having received the vaccinations, residents are very hopeful to have visits with their loved ones. Although staff have tried to fill the void of the care received from families, nothing takes the place of family. Residents are not only longing to see their loved ones, they are suffering emotionally and physically. The average stay in long-term care is about two years and two months. So many of these residents may not live long enough to see family members if we don't make adjustments to the current visitation regulations.

We ask that you execute an Executive Order allowing for each resident in long-term care be allowed to have in-person visits with essential visitors/caregivers like are allowed in several other states. The order could include requirements for training, health screenings, testing, scheduled/limited visits, masks and other personal protection equipment, social distancing and other requirements deemed necessary to keep residents and staff safe. We greatly appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Ginny Helms
President & CEO